



Newsletter July 2015



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HERITAGE FESTIVAL 2015



Once again the Peterborough Heritage Festival, held on 20th and 21st June, was a great success and demonstrated the high interest levels in the city for all things historical. Stuart Orme and his team of Vivacity employees and volunteers once again excelled themselves and should be congratulated for their efforts.

Civic Society committee members ensured that the society had a profile at the event, both promoting the society and encouraging passers-by to consider membership. Thanks to all who came to say hello.

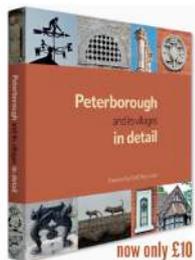
SUMMER VISITS

Many thanks to all those who came along to one of our three summer visits – Castor House, Moulton Mill and Kirby Hall. Special thanks must go to our hosts and guides for these visits. Look out for detailed accounts of all these visits in our next Annual Report and Review.



If any members have suggestions for summer visits 2016 (yes, it'll soon be here!) please let either Pauline Sidebottom or one of your newsletter editors know – all suggestions will be considered.

PETERBOROUGH AND ITS VILLAGES IN DETAIL



Our book, 'Peterborough and its Villages in Detail' continues to sell steadily and is available via our website at the bargain price of £10.00. Recently we have received enquiries from far and wide including Civic Trust Cymru, the sister organisation to Civic Voice in Wales who are including an article about the book in their summer bulletin to members.

The Institute of Historic Building Conservation has written a glowing review of our book for their magazine Context and this has just been published. Full copies of their past issues are available after six months on their website. www.ihbc.org.uk

PLANNING APPLICATIONS

Each fortnight one of our two Plans Groups reviews the latest applications for planning permission and listed building consent. The following is a selection of the cases they have commented upon since your last newsletter together with the subsequent decision of the City Council where available.

The reference numbers have been given so that should you wish to examine the plans, you can access them via this page on Peterborough City Council's website:

http://www.peterborough.gov.uk/planning_and_building.aspx and by clicking on Planning & Building Online Register.

14/02102/FUL Former Carnegie Library building Broadway. Installation of new entrance and ramped access. Opposed as seriously upsetting the balanced design of the Broadway elevation.

Outcome: Application withdrawn.

15/00141/FUL Touthill Close office block. This application was for an addition floor on top of the block for 6 additional units. The floor is shown set back from the main elevations such that it was considered acceptable.

Outcome: Permitted 22nd April.

15/00009/FUL. 21 Priestgate (Former City and Counties Club) Change of use to 9 residential flats. We regretted the loss of this long-established meeting place and recommended some minor amendments but did not oppose.

Outcome: Permitted 1st April with condition requiring photographic record of internal features of interest prior to development.

15/00058/FUL. 1A Brassey Close Three-storey block of housing for 30 students. No objection to the principle of a development here to improve the Bourges Blvd frontage. But oppose this scheme - overbearing impact on the GN Cottages and their Conservation Area, bad internal layout causing noise problems for the occupants, very poor design, lack of provision for cycles/ motorcycles, etc.

Outcome: Application withdrawn.

15/00429/ADV Stainless steel monolith with LCD screen adjacent to Norman Arch on Cathedral Square. This 'welcome monolith' proposed by the Cathedral is 2400mm high and 800mm wide. Whilst supporting the design and principle, we opposed its proposed location as detrimental to the setting of the Norman Arch and interrupting smooth pedestrian movements between Bridge Street and the Precincts. If permitted, we sought a condition requiring removal of existing poster signs on the Norman Gate.

Outcome: Permitted 4th June with condition requiring removal of poster signs and wall returned to its former appearance.

15/00684/FUL and 15/00685/LBC Change of use to 8 flats, Yorkshire House 28-30 Priestgate (now ASK).

The latest of several such proposed changes in Priestgate. This important listed building has an historic sundial celebrating the Restoration on its south wing and may well have a medieval timber-framed core. We decided not to oppose the change of use but requested the imposition of conditions covering the following:

- a watching brief during structural works to determine the extent of timber framed construction and ensure its protection,
- b. to secure the thorough recording of the sundial, and
- c. detailed drawings of treatment to ground floor panelled room.

Outcome: Permitted 9th July with conditions relating to points a and b above.



THE MEMORIAL HOSPITAL LATEST

The City Council is going full pelt towards the building of a new primary school on the Midland Road/Thorpe Road corner. The site includes the central range of the old Memorial Hospital, not a statutory listed building but on the list of Buildings of Local Importance. We all had assurances when an outline application was made for development of the entire PDH holding by its new owners, Lands Improvement Holdings, that this Memorial Hospital entrance building (MHEB) would be retained.

Things took a different turn in May when we were presented with an application for the school, well linked to the retained building, but involving the demolition of all but its façade and replacement of the rest in replica. The justification was that the school intends to use the space contained within the retained building as classrooms, but needs to remove internal dividing walls in order to create adequate spaces. In removing these walls structural problems arise which are not easy to address. Accordingly the Council and its architects proposed the retention of the MHEB façade, but the rebuilding in replica of the remainder.

We realised that some Peterborough folk would be very angry at what they would see as a betrayal. Why didn't the Civic Society make a huge fuss about it? Here's why.

- The most important part of the Memorial Hospital, now that its functions have been relocated, is its façade with 'IN REMEMBRANCE 1914-18' under the porch canopy. That is staying. The plaques hung just inside the front door are being retained and will be re-erected in very similar positions. (Many assume that these list the names of the Fallen. They don't. They list the names of contributors towards the original hospital)
- Now that the side wings have been demolished, the flank walls of the retained building are a mess, and perforated with openings. It would have been nigh on impossible to make these good convincingly.

So we have not objected to the application, but made the following points:

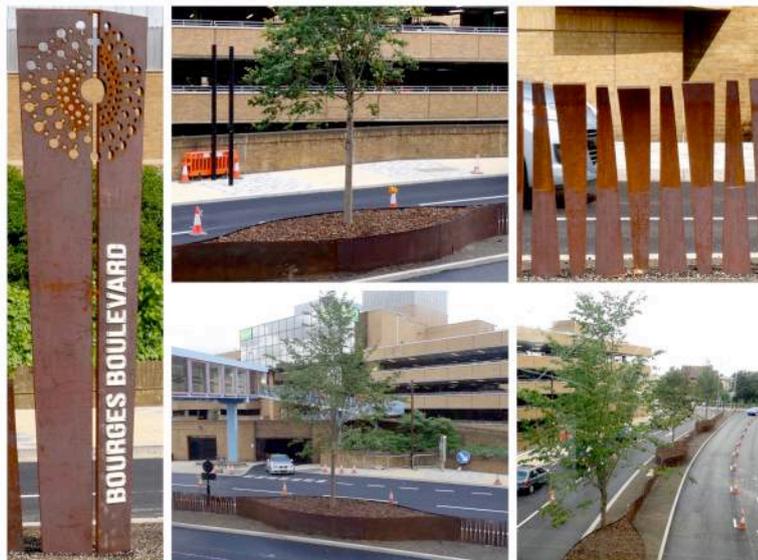
- The quality detailing (brick bond, chimneys etc.) of the existing MHEB must be repeated in the replica elevations and roof and implementation carefully controlled.
- The new school building's south elevation to Thorpe Road is poor and must be improved (this has happened).
- The linkage of the 2-storey school hall to the rear of the MHEB serves to maintain its dominance.
- The use of the MHEB for teaching space is welcomed and enables it to be fully integrated into the school.
- The forecourt needs to be improved with landscaping as a fitting setting for a war memorial.

(The reference number of this planning application is 15/00692/FUL. This application will be considered at 1.30 p.m. on Tuesday 28th July in the Town Hall Bourges Room.)



BOURGES BOULEVARD CENTRAL RESERVATION

If the first question is 'when will the road works end?' (Answer, this summer), close on its heels comes 'What is the rusty steel stuff on the central reservation all about?'. It's art in the service of function, of course. The City Council says "The weaving shapes of the railings to the central reservation convey an image of our Fen edge location and the movement of grasses and reeds. The elongated shape of the Corten steel tree planters echo Fenland boat transport as well as our railway and engineering heritage in their construction, materials and lines".



And the rust? Corten steel doesn't get an applied finish. Its rusty surface protects it from further deterioration - see also the Shanks Bridge over the Nene near the Dog and Doublet - made from the same material. We'll all grow to love it I'm sure. If any Civic Society members have Corten steel beds they might like to donate them for erection (Tracy Emin's style) on the Bright Street roundabout (to echo the housing growth of Peterborough, of course!)



IN BRIEF

More ACV's for Peterborough? Assets of Community Value (ACV's) when formally registered, provide an opportunity for community groups to bid to purchase them should their owner seek to sell. In Peterborough, The Green Back Yard has been through the registration process and is raising funds with the aim to buy their site from the City Council. Civic Voice held a seminar in Peterborough last month and Peterborough Civic Society contacted representatives of other local organisations (e.g. CAMRA and Bretton Parish Council) with a potential interest who attended. We'll see what actions materialise from the event. If any members feel strongly that there is a community asset in Peterborough which should be registered please get in touch with us.

Jo Robotham. We were very sorry to hear of the passing of Jo Robotham, local architect, perhaps best known for the original prize-winning design of the Key Theatre. An obituary will appear in our forthcoming Annual Report and Review.

What no Chairman's evening? Observant members will have spotted that there was no Chairman's evening in April. We have decided to replace it with two more general speaker evenings in the future. This extension of our season into May should ensure that more of our meetings are held in milder evenings. We will still aim from time to time to invite prominent speakers whose talk will interest more than our own membership and who justify our reaching out to invite others in the City.

DIARY DATE – A.G.M.

We are delighted that **Dr Freddie Gick**, chair of Civic Voice nationally (our umbrella body), will be the speaker at our AGM. He will speak on the role of the civic movement generally and on the activities of Civic Voice. The AGM will take place on **Monday 12th October at 7.30 p.m.** at St Marks Hall Lincoln Road.